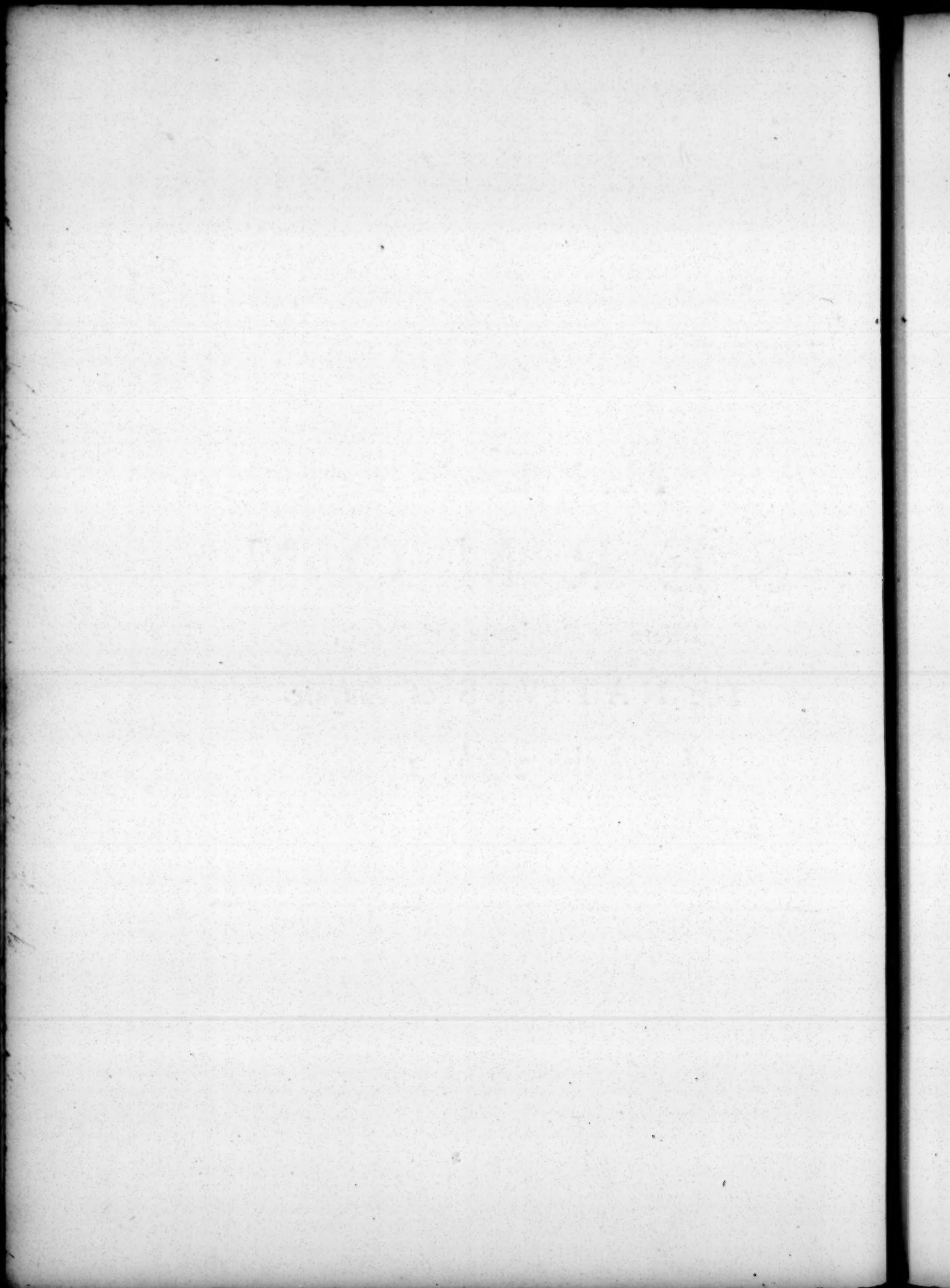

Mr. *P R A T T*'s
S E R M O N

Before the Gentlemen and Others,
The **N A T I V E S** of *Aldgate*.

August the 28th, 1706.



*The Excellency of the Duty of Religious Unity
among Brethren ; in Judgment and Affections.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Church

O F

St. Botolph without Aldgate,

To the Gentlemen and Others,

The N A T I V E S of the said Parish,

On *August* 28th, 1706.

Being the D A Y of their Anniversary

CHARITY-FEAST.

By B. P R A T T, Eccl. Angl. P R E S B. Chaplain to
His Grace the Duke of Northumberland. &c.

*Published at the Request of the Stewards, and many others
that Heard it.*

L O N D O N : Printed by T. Wilmer for Tho. Davis,
in Red-Lyon-Street in White-Chappel, 1706.



To the very Worthy
Mr. JAMES ROBINSON,
Capt. JOHN SILK, And
Mr. THOMAS HARRISON,
The [Again] Good STEWARDS,
AND GENEROUS
REVIVERS
OF THE
Annual CHARITY-FEAST,
OF THE
NATIVES of St. Botolph
Without Aldgate, London ;
AND

To the REST of our Beloved Countrymen,
This plain Discourse, Publish'd at their General Re-
quest, is most Humbly Dedicated, by their

Affectionate Brother,

And Servant,

B. PRATT.

THE
MAY 1862
CITY OF NEW YORK
THE
REVIEWER
OF THE
NATIVE
AND
TO THE
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P S A L. cxxxiii. 1.

*Behold ! How Good and how Pleasant
it is, for Brethren to dwell together
in Unity.*

THE Occasion, very Worthy and Beloved Countrymen, of your this Day's Assembling, being still, for the Procurement, Preservation, and Promotion of mutual Friendship and Charity : And *now* your generous Appearance for that Pious and *Truly* noble end, make these words of the *Psalmist*, at this time, a peculiarly proper and agreeable Subject to Discourse on.

Indeed one can hardly help it. Such sincere Signs of *Brotherly* Love and Kindness between *any* People, being not only (in earnest) as shall by and by be shewn, a *good* thing for themselves : But so *Pleasant*, for even others, and much more for those, who are so *Happy* to be *immediately concern'd* with them herein ; to Contemplate and Observe, as *common* Nature is not well able to avoid, being *greatly* taken with.

SO Good, and SO *Pleasant* is this, that for the Royal Prophet's part, he could not consider it without a Joyous *Rapture*, nor speak of it without a *Note of Admiration* ; without an *Ecce ! Or, Behold !* — *Behold !* — (says he) *How Good, and how Pleasant it is* —

The

The Excellency of the Duty of Religious Unity

The whole *Psalms*, wherein are these words of the Text, is Inscribed, *Canticum Excellentissimum Davidis*, one of the most *Excellent* of David's *Psalms*. And really so it *is*, both as to the *matter*; it being a *Panegyric*, or *Hymn*, in Praise of that *Incomparable* of all Graces, *Unity* or *Charity*; and also as to the *manner* of it, or that Admirable *Rhetoric* wherewith 'tis Adorn'd. The Incomparableness of this Grace, being first set forth by a Pithy and Pathetical Exclamation, in the words, *Behold ! How Good and how Pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*; and after Illustrated by several Elegant Similitudes, taken from the Precious Ointment on *Aaron's* Head, and the fructifying Dew that falls on the Mountains: As in the following Verses you may Read.

In the Words of the Text, are Three things Considerable.

First, The Persons here spoken of, [*Brethren.*]
Secondly, The Condition of them, [*Unity.*] And
Thirdly, The Excellency of this Condition: That it has in it, these Two great Things or Advantages, *Profit* and *Pleasure*.

1st, *Profit*. For 'tis a Good or Beneficial Condition: How *Good* it is! says *David*.

2dly, *Pleasure*. 'Tis a *pleasant* or lovely Condition: Therefore *how Pleasant is it!* (says he) too. Yea, and both these, in no *common* Measure, but in an Extraordinary Degree, 'tis *Good* and *Pleasant* to *Admiration*. For *Behold ! How Good and how Pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.*
Each

Each of these I shall beg leave to *touch* upon, with a word or two, particularly about your very *Christian* Intent of *this* Day, as *greatly* conducing to this *Unity* or *Charity*, that I be not Imperfect in my Discourse, and but Briefly, that I may not be tedious. And let my ensuing Matter, bear *some* proportion to *your* Extensive Goodness, whose Capacious Bounds Include and Design, not only *your own* Instruction, (which it may *now* seem you least want in *this* Respect) but that of every one.

I begin with the First thing. The *Persons* here I. spoken of, they are *Brethren* ; which in the strictest Sense, denotes those that are Born of the same Parents. And between People of so near a Relation, an entire Union, as it appears peculiarly an *Indispensable* Duty by the Law of God and Nature, 'tis a State of great Felicity for themselves to enjoy, and a lovely Object (as you all know) for every one to see. Proportionately great Pity it is, there's no more to be seen of it in many Families professing Humanity and Reason, yea, Honour and true Religion too ; but so we find, that the contrary was of early Date : The World *began* with Dissention among such ; so that we Read of *Cain*, that he not only *Hated*, but *Slew* his Brother *Abel*. And Alas ! Thus but too much it has continued ever since, even in the Houses of many Good Men. As in that of *Isaac*, *Esau*, and *Jacob* ; who, though Twins in Nature, struggled together in the very Womb :

A Prognostic of that Variance, which long after remained between them, through the One's Supplanting the other. The like is found in the Family of *David*; *Absalom* first *Hated*, then *Slew* his Brother *Arimon* — Such another Feud commenc'd between *Adonijah* and *Solomon*, Two other of his Sons, Competitors for his Kingdom. I might Instance in many more, how there has not (as there should) have Resided the dearest Love with this near Alliance; insomuch, that the Sacred Scripture gives us not *One* Instance of two own or natural Brothers, so intirely, according as *Jonathan* and this Royal *Psalmist*, though of Two several Tribes. But our *own* Experience is over-sufficient. Great is the Pity I say, because, as to the *Reason* of the thing, if *those* are not Friends in the most intire Agreement, who should? Are they not the *same Flesh*? And what, the meanest sensible Creature, ever yet *Hated*, was at Variance with, or Despised *his own Flesh*? The Argument therefore of *Abraham* to *Lot*, is very Equitable. *Let there be no strife between me and thee, for we are Brethren*, of the nearest Affinity, and therefore beyond any others, under the most just Obligation to Love and Concord.

Gen. 13. 2.

This, would *such* at difference well bethink themselves of, with the Contents of the Text, the *Goodness* and *Pleasantness* of Brethrens Dwelling together in *Unity* (as immediately will be further said) compar'd especially with the *Miseries*

series and *Baseness* of Dissentions among them, might be very Effectual : The First, for *Restoring* ; the other, for *Advancing* their Tenderest and Reciprocal Endearments. But,

2dly, There are Brethren of a *Society*, or of the same *Occupation* : Such, who for the better, and more Universal Improvement and Service of one another, and of their main Businesses and Employ, have joyned themselves into one Body, and are (many of them) Legally *Incorporated* by the *Royal Favour* and *Law of the Land* ; or there are of the same *Neighbourhood*, or especially, Brethren *Natives* of the same *Country* ; or nearer yet, of the same *Parish*, who have so Engaged themselves, for the mutual Encouragement of all good Offices among them. Under which obliging Character, W E E now (I said) Appear — The Good and Pleasure of *Unity* among *these*, seems very Apparent, and already *granted* by the cause of their Establishment : And as 'tis most Right and Fit, as the Vulgarest Capacities are amply assur'd that so they *should* agree, so equally Unreasonable, as well as Bad and Miserable is it if they do not ; for *then* the *end* of their Undertaking, or design of their Conjunction, is Perverted and Overthrown. — But as to all this, the Obligation of Unity is further very *strong*, and *spreads* its self in the next sort of Brethren. For,

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3dly, There are *those* in a *Spiritual*, as well as Carnal, Secular Respect, Sons of the same Father, the Great G O D of Heaven and Earth, and Brethren of their Elder Brother Christ, the Saviour of the World. Thus are every one present, and all other Christians, *Brethren* to each other : Of which sort, the *Psalmist* here *principally* speaks of Brethren in a *Religious* Respect ; meaning peculiarly, the *Jews* in their Peaceable time, that *Posterity of Israel* — Now *T H I S* is it, on *which*, as the Foundation of *all*, and forasmuch as the Deficiency of this latter Age, seems more especially to make it *tollerable*, I Choose at this Opportunity, a little to *dwell*, Of *Brethren of the same Religion*, or professing the Gospel of our Lord.

And here, the *Second* thing in the Text, may most properly take place, and be particularly Handled.

H. The *Condition* of these Brethren, [*Unity*] their *dwelling together in Unity*. A Grace, which is certainly, both the great *Duty* and *Blessing* of A L L those that are of the *Christian* Faith. 'Twas strictly prescribed to, and much practiced by the *Jews* of Old, under the *Law* ; and to this very time, few are now so *firmly* United in every Respect (generally speaking) as are they : And how does this Upbraid, and Shame the opposite practice among the Professors of the Gospel, and further discover the deplorable Scandal of its
not

not being so among fellow *Christians*, who at present are sadly *Divided* in what they ought to be *One* ! For this Union is Twofold, in *Judgment* and *Affections*.

In Judgment (*First*). For Christian Brethren, are to Dwell together in Unity of *Judgment* ; *i. e.* as far as is possible, they are to Judge alike, or to mind the *same* thing in Religion. A Duty of vast Importance : on which, may I be permitted more especially to *Insist*, having never spoken to you before on *this* Point. Now, setting aside the too near and grating Observation, what Confusions are the consequents of the contrary ? How easily and naturally provoking to *Atheism*, or apt to center in *Scepticism*, or Carelessness, and Prophaning of *Spiritual* Concerns ? That we may not give the *least* Offence, and for the most prevailing Confirmation of *this* Doctrine, let us wholly confine our selves to the *Will* and *Mind* of *GOD*, expressed in his Sacred Word ; where, by his most Holy Dictates, we find it in several places plainly commanded us. As at *Rom. 12. 16.* That we be like minded, or mind the same thing. So *Phil. 1. 27.* That We stand fast in one Spirit, and in one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. So *Chap. 2. 1. and 2. ver.* to the same purpose, as a matter of the *serioufist* and *weightiest* Concern, we are most earnestly Enjoin'd and Beseech'd, if there be any consolation in Christ, any comfort of Love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any bowels or mercies ; that we fulfil the Apostles Joy, and so
please

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please GOD, by whose Gracious Influence he spoke : And wherein ? What follows so *solemn* a Preface ? But this, *That ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

Acts 4. 32.

I know not what *can* more be said, by way of positive Precept, and most moving Entreaty ; or what *can* carry with it more of Obligation, than do *these* Portions of Holy Writ, to this Duty of *Like-mindedness*, or *Unity* in our *Minds* and *Judgments*. Yet to *these* may be Added, the *Example* of the *Holy Apostles*, &c. So we are assured of *them*, and the *multitude* of Christians with them, that *all of them which believed, were of one Heart, and of one Mind*. That was the State of the *Apostolic* *best* of Times ; which surely, in all Reason, and with the Highest Respect, should be a *Pattern* to all succeeding Ages. Thus too the Gospel *begun* in Union : By it its *Foundation* was *laid* ; and certainly, it will not successfully be carried on by *Division* and *Discord*.

Of the *Apostles* themselves (again) we Read it not *once*, but *often* mentioned, that they being Assembled together, were all of one accord ; as most eminently, in that Second Chapter of the *Acts*, 1st and 2^d verses. *And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the Apostles] were all with one accord, in one place, i. e. with one Mind*, as the *Original* word Imports. And THEN it was, when they were *thus* together, in *such* *Unity*, THEN the Holy Ghost Descended on them ;

them ; the All-wise G O D, thereby seeming to Intimate, that if we Christians were joined together (as those Apostles) with one Accord, and one Mind, T H E N may we in an especial manner, expect the Gifts of the Holy Spirit on us. For the Holy Spirit will dwell with those who are joined together in Unity of Spirit, and that keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

So that it evidently appears, both by *Injunction*, and the *practice* of the Blessed Apostles, 'tis the Duty of Christian Brethren, to be all of one mind, or at least, to endeavour as much as in them lies, to be so. Thus pressing forward to Perfection herein, with the utmost of their Ability : Such is the Tenor of St. Paul's Exhortation ; Nevertheless, whereunto we have attained, let us Phil. 3. 10. walk by the same Rule, and mind the same thing. He speaks in the Verse before, of being Perfect and Like-minded ; and here he explains himself, as far as in this Life C A N be in them, i. e. with the most Industrious, and Unfeignedest, and Impartial Application and Search after Truth, let all endeavour to be Unanimous. And what that Great Saint Exhorts to about the indispensable Obligation of Peaceableness, that are they solli- Rom. 12. 8. citously to strive after, in the Duty of Like-mindedness. If it be possible, and as much as in them lies, they are to be Like-minded ; i. e. they are not, as perhaps may be the unhappy use of some, to widen the Breaches in the Church, and think Salvation consists in going off from others

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others in their Sentiments, but to endeavour among themselves, with all *becoming* Earnestness, the *Healing*, and making them up: To be *Reconcilers* (what *can* be) and so be the *Blessed makers of Peace*. This is the abundant Happiness the *G O D* of Truth hath promised to his Church, this Like-mindedness, or Unity of Judgment, if the *People* do not hinder it. *Jer. 30. 27. I will give them one heart, and one way.* For *this* then, let every one constantly pray, and take pains. So the *Apostle* teaches us to do in himself. *Rom. 15. 5, 6. Now the G O D of Patience and Consolation, grant you A L L to be like minded, that you may A L L with one mind, and one mouth, glorifie God.* And to this he Exhorts us, which implies, it must be laboured for. *1 Cor. 1. 10. Now I beseech you Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, that ye be A L L perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same Judgment.*

So very plain it is, that *Unity* herein, is a Duty of universal Necessity, *as far as is attained*, and *to be attained*. And Oh ! How Good, and how Pleasant a thing would *this* be, to behold *Christian Brethren*, every where thus dwelling together ! But,

Secondly, There is an *Unity of Affections*, which is properly called *Love*, or *Charity* ; and though there be some doubt concerning the *former*, there is none of *this*, that they ought to *Love* one another.

another so, as *ever* to be ready, to do each other all the good they can. He cannot be a *Christian*, that *denies* or makes any *doubt* hereof. This being our Blessed Saviour's *New Commandment*, which stuck closest to his Heart all along ; and even, when about to lay down his Life for our sakes. St. John 13. 34. Yea, the very *Badge* and grand Cognizance that he gave of *sincere* Christianity, or *true* Discipleship to him, ver. 35. By *THIS* (says he) *shall all men* know, *that ye are my Disciples, if ye Love*, or are Charitable, *one to another*. By *THIS* ! of which he was the Superlative Exemplar, in all his wonderful and exceeding Instances of it, to *most* unworthy us ! and which is so frequently and pathetically Recommended to us by the Beloved St. John, &c. Agreeably, this was the early signal Character of his happy Profelytes in the *Primitive* Times, by which *they* were Gloriously distinguish'd from, and did far excel, all Mankind beside. So that in St. *Tertullian's* Days, 'twas the Observation in every Bodies Mouth ; *Ecce ut Christiani se invicem amant ! ut pro altro utro Mori parati sunt*. Look how these *CHRISTIANS* Love one another, that they are even ready to *Dye* for, and in each others stead !

So Chap 1. c.
12. and 17. ver.

See his General Epistles.

And yet *these* Times, there is some equivocating or false dealing in so plain a Case — 'Tis granted indeed, that *Christian Brethren should* dwell together thus in *Love* ; but then the fallacy lies in the over-nice, and too narrow restriction

C

of

of the *term* of Christian *Brethren*, which some confine to those of their *own* Party alone. They *will* dwell in Accord and Love with their Brethren, and *but* with them, *i. e.* only with those of their *own* sort ; and so this Affection in *them*, is not so much *Love*, as *Design* — 'Tis *instead* of Union, 'tis *Faction* only — Such People, [the barely *pretended* Servants of our Blessed Saviour] our Lord *reproves*, both in the highest Instances of HIS Affection (as we find in Scripture) to even Infidels and Foes, and also in Words, where he declares that a Love of *their* kind, is no better than that of the veryest Publicans and Sinners.

St. Mat. 5. 46,

47.

St. Luke 6. 32.

If ye love them only that love you, what reward have you ? Or how are ye better ? Do not even THEY the same ? Yea, do not People of the worst Combinations, so love each other, and are kind to those of their own Herd ?

Alas ! *True* Christian Love, is a far more diffusive Grace than all this, and *its* Object much Larger and more Comprehensive. *It* extends *its* self to ALL Christians, as *Brethren*, and not barely to such a Company — Indeed, I might say to *all Mankind*, to very *Enemies*, St. Matth. 5. 44. 'Tis an Universal *Philanthropie*, which has no streighter Limits, or other, than those of the *whole World*. So that the *Apostle* says all with an excellent Distinction, where 'tis imply'd, that the approved Believer is thus *good unto* all Men, though *especially to those who are of the Household of Faith*.

Gal. 6. 10.

This

This then, is the *Second* sort of Unity, that of the Affections, or universal hearty *Love* ; and *this* is the *Condition* of good Brethren in Christ — They (at least) constantly *endeavour* to be *one* in their *Judgments* ; and if perhaps they yet are not, they will be sure to be so in *Amity*, and all its Charitable Effects. If they *CAN*, they will agree in their *Minds* : If they *cannot*, they will (however) Love one another in their *Hearts*, and shew it on all Occasions, by those needful creditable Actions to them, I have formerly Discoursed on at large before you on the same Anniversaries with this. These are their *Duties* (I cannot yet too often say) nor are they more so than their Blessedness. Such Duties they are ! that if for them there were no *other* Reward, they are a mighty Recompense to themselves. And that's the

Third thing, I have [*more specially*] but in few Words to consider, even the *excellency* of the Condition of *these* Brethren, that thus dwell together in *Unity*, which is described and set off by, III.

1st, The *Profit* or *Benefit* of it, to the Persons concern'd therein. How *GOOD* it is for Brethren, *thus* to dwell together in *Unity*, *i. e.* in their *Judgment* and *Affections* too ; (for I shall join both into one Consideration, as I would fain have both go *together*.) And in *this* Respect, this Unity is compar'd by the *Psalmist* in the

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Verſes following the Text, to the *Dew of Hermon that fell upon the hill of Zion* : For as the Dew moiſtens and refreſhes the Earth, and makes it fruitful, ſo does *this* Unity among any Society, in all its moſt advantageous Conſequences of Intereſt, and eſpecially among all that name the name of *Chriſt*, [as to their moſt Holy FAITH.] For whereas, Diviſions in Sacred Affairs (as is too ſadly obvious to need proof) work very dreadful destructive Effects, by way of hindrance to the Propagation of the true Religion, &c. according to that *Helliſh* Maxim of the Jeſuits, *Divide & impera* ; or rather to that Axiom of our deareſt JESUS, *A Kingdom, or City, or Houſe, divided againſt it ſelf, cannot ſtand*. This Unity cauſes thoſe that are planted in the Houſe of the Lord, to flouriſh in the Courts of the Houſe of our God : It makes Fruitful the Holy Church, and vaſtly tends to the Increase of its Sons and Daughters. Accordingly we Read in the moſt Antient Records of the *Fiſt* Ages of the Religion of our Bleſſed Saviour, that *his* then Converts, our moſt Illuſtrious Examples, being ever ſo diſpos'd, did not only wonderfully ſtartle and ſweetly charm, but ſtrongly convince the very *Infidels* ! Not only Enamour the *Heathen* of them, ſo that many, their moſt violent Perſecutors were here-upon moved to ſpare them ; but from furious Adverſaries grew Friends, and became their Captiv'd *Proſelytes*, and ſo were added among the dayly multiplying number of ſuch as ſhould be ſaved. And thus the Unity the *Pſalmiſt* here Recommends

mends and Extolls, will *now* be as powerful with those miserable People that are Foreigners to, or have fell off from the Precepts and Doctrines of our Lord : For *who* would not *willingly* cast in his Lot among so agreeable a Company, *that take sweet Counsel together, and walk in the house of God as Friends* ? Unbelievers would embrace us in *crowds*, and be *G L A D* when we should say unto them, *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord* : To which we might well hope they would Answer, *O U R Feet* [from henceforth] *shall stand in T H Y Gates, O Jerusalem !* And why ? But for that *Jerusalem is a City at UNITY with it self*, and *T H E R E F O R E* *thither go up the Tribes.* *Psal. 122. 1. 2, 3.*

And as to the *Church*, so *alike Beneficial* is this happy condition ('tis probable) to the *State*, as to the most lasting prosperity of every kind ; so that according to that Prayer in our *incomparable Liturgy*, if *all they that do confess G O D's holy Name*, would agree in the truth of his Holy Word, we might justly expect *they would live universally, in full enjoyment of all those valuable Effects of Unity and godly Love.* And how *unspeakably* comfortable would this be ! How much *desired* and *wanted* among, and *serviceable* to us !

But 2dly, *This Unity* is not only a *good* or *profitable*, but 'tis a *pleasant* or lovely thing too. Not only *good* for us to possess it, but *pleasant* also for our *selves* and *others* that *behold* it : And is it not
Rare

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Rare and most Estimable, for *Profit* and *Pleasure*, to go *thus* hand in hand ? Thus then, *this* Unity for the *pleasure* of it, is compar'd by the *Psalmist*, to *that* Ointment wherewith *Aaron* was Anointed ; which was very *pretious*, and very Odoriferously *grateful*, as well as very *diffusive* ; for it descended from his Head to his Beard, and to the very skirts of his Garment. So *this* Unity among all Brethren is very *Pretious*, not only as 'tis very scarce (that we wish it were not) but as being a Virtue of great worth for its utility and takingness, in the Eyes of G O D and every sensible Man. On that score 'tis very *grateful* too, as are usually *pretious* things ; and herein like *Aaron's* Ointment (as it were) of a very fragrant smell ; for it procures a *Good Name*, which the Wise Man tells us, is a *pretious Ointment* ; and like that of Devout *Mary*, it fills the whole House, the whole Church, the whole Earth, where it is, with its Perfume and Repute. And as *diffusive* is it — [so every way pleasant it is] it runs down from the Head, *i. e.* the *Superiors* in the Society, or Body, or Church, to the Beard, yea, even to the *Hem* of the Cloathing ; *i. e.* to A L L, to the most *Inferior* Members thereof — 'Tis the very Life-blood and Nourishment that thrivingly disperses it self, to every the *minutest* part of the Community or Brotherhood in an *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil* sense ; or like the *Light*, that enlightens the whole House, and every corner of it.

Eccles. 7. 1.

And

And this *general* Benefit of *Religious* Unity, King David here sets forth and Illustrates in both *Metaphors*. It is like the *Dew of Hermon*, and the *Dew that fell on the hill of Zion* (for so it should be always Read). Now *Hermon* and *Zion* were two far distant Hills or Mountains, Scituate at the two opposite ends of the Land of *Canaan* ; so that the Unity here meant, is like the *Dew* that *profperously* water'd both *Hermon* and *Zion*, i. e. from *Dan* to *Beersheba*. All over the Land of *Canaan* this Unity is an *inestimable* Happiness, *universally* commodious and pleasing in *every* respect to *all* the People of *G O D* — SO Good and SO Pleasant a thing it is !

And *this*, even those most guilty of Dissolving, or of not promoting this general Union in Sacred things, do thus far own, that every Sect does so earnestly desire, so studiously maintain, and so largely boast of it among their separate Selves. But how *unreasonable* my Brethren, in the mean while, appears the *common practice* in this Case ! For if *Unity*, by Peoples *own confession*, be so desirable, and to be commended in a *small* and *private* (as it were) Party, why not so too, and *rather* (then) *universally* among A L L that are Baptized ? And what *fair* Excuse *can* be made, if Men will please to approve and labour for this Agreement in their own *particular* Societies and *little* Congregations, and yet at least do not care to encourage it among the *whole Church of G O D* ?

*Twas

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'Twas never the *Design* or *Spirit* of the *Gospel* (then) we find, that *Christian* Brethren, as if they were of several *Religions*, should divide themselves into several Parties : No ! But that the same most *Perfect* and Inviolable Concord, should abound throughout the *whole* Multitude of those ~~that~~ call themselves by that *Glorious* Name.

Our most Compassionate Saviour, when in that *Solemn Prayer* for his Disciples, he Imprecated that great *Blessing* of Unity I am now upon, [and which that all the World may obtain, *he* will *never* be wanting on *his* part] *that they may be one, as he and his Father are one.* Did he Request it for his Twelve *Apostles* alone ? No ! for he expressly Adds, *I pray not for these only, but for A L L them that shall believe on me through their word, that they A L L may be one.* On this Remarkable Account, which let them most seriously consider and tremble at the dreadful Consequences thereof, may likely fall on them who any way prevent it : *That the World may believe that thou hast sent me.* St. John 17. 20, 21.

So St. Paul, when he wrote to the *Corinthians*, was not satisfied [it being not sufficient] that the Disciples of even one APOSTLE held together in *Unity*, if they separated from the Disciples of another. But he highly blames them, notwithstanding that strict Agreement that was between each Party, even THEREFORE, because they were divided into SECTS. While
one

one said, *I am of Paul*, another, *I am of Apollos*, another, *I am of Cephas*, and another, *I am of Christ* : And most earnestly and passionately beseeches them ALL [by the Title of Brethren] in the name of (what should be the most prevailing with every one of us, which is so with even Heaven) the Lord JESUS CHRIST, that they would all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among them ; but that they be perfectly joined together in the same Charitable Mind, and in the same Judgment, 1 Cor. I. 10. and following Verses. And as St. Jude (speaking in Relation to Infidels and their Conversion) earnestly contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, ver the 3d of his General Epistle.

Thus far your Patience has been Exercis'd, with the remembrance of *who* are the Brethren meant in the Text ; not only those of *Affinity* according to the *Flesh*, Born of the same Parents ; nor only those of an *Occupation*, *Society*, or *Neighbourhood*, or Fellow *Natives* of the same *Country* or *Parish*, though these should be especially regarded by us. But farther yet is Included, ALL People in general professing the *Religion of Christ*. Then concerning *Unity*, that here is understood, *their being one* [as much as possible] in Judgment and Affection ; Oh ! that they were so for EVER United in OUR most EXCELLENT Communion. Where [as has been abundantly and frequently prov'd, and it fully appears] the Faith and Government, and Worship of the Church are Holy, and Catholic, and Apostolic, and admirably free from the Extreams

of Irreverence and Superstition, and every thing culpable, but what (at worst) is only matter of Indifferency, as those Gentlemen that differ from us, are pleased Ingenuously to own. And I have shewn, wherein the Good and Pleasure of this Unity consists.

Now as to the *Begetting, Conserving, and Augmenting* this Unity, and all its happy Charitable *Effects* among us (to Apply no further at *this* time) *this* cannot be where People come not at one another. No! the way is rather by Opportunities of *Interview* and *Converse*; especially, when by free *Assignment* and joint *Consent* occasion'd, whereby the good Preparation and ready Disposure of the *Temper* is discover'd, and gives Encouragement. *Then* Assembling, sitting down, and refreshing Peoples selves together of *choice* and *willingly*, are a *mighty* Advantage: But *more* especially, when the *so* doing is declar'd before hand to be, and you *meet* the Invitation for that very end. Therefore *Christianly Sociable*, and *modest* Repasts (of *this* nature intended) are generally *enconrag'd*, as *highly* Beneficial to Fraternal Concord and Charity. Yea (truly) a good and pleasant sign thereof, and were used even among the best of Religious People in the *Primitive* Times; and aptly called *Agapæ*, or Feasts of *Love* or *Charity*. And *such* is *ours* now, with the same Intention præsignified and provided, and with that excellent disposition of Soul (I hope) Approach'd.

ALL

A L L *that* Good which will be done *hereby* on This Day, we must in *Justice* declare first owing to the Voluntary, Sollicitous, and Expensive trouble of those *Generous* Gentlemen among us, that have once more *Reviv'd* the Annual, Creditable Custom hereof, and will still labour *more* to keep it up. Public hearty *Thanks* is their *due*, and most gladly we now *pay* it them ; and to each of *YOU* next, for your *ready* Compliance with a Matter so *Christianly Laudable and Charitable* ; may you be fully Successful, without any Interruption or Disappointment in the present *purpose* of it ! May it *Long* continue in Honour to *G O D*, and in singular Benefit to our Fellow-Natives ; an Ornament to our own, and a shining President to Parishes abroad ! To this end, may you never want Persons *like*, and *worthy* of your selves, of such an Honourable Disposition, as will *gladly* receive the Laurels for its support, that [as much as *this* Assembling *C A N* do] here may be a Constant, Amicable, Christian, Brotherly *Correspondence, Understanding and Agreement*, kept up and enlarg'd among us : And that our indigent Fatherless, or our other needy Children in their turns, by your *wonted* Merciful Contributions, may be rescued from the Miseries of Beggary, [as *M A N Y* of e'm *have* been] and by being prudently Bound Apprentices to good Trades, be put in an *honest, thriving* way of Living, and may Bless you for it. *You will be pleased to remember your Charity to them, doubly at this time, being a Year behind with them in this matter.*

I cannot *perswade* my self, nor (I think verily) is there need, to press *this* part of the *most preferable* of Virtues *more* upon *kind* Natures, and which is for the *Great Service* (so very *faithfully* and *wisely* it will be Manag'd) of the *neediest* Objects *among our selves*. I having (besides) very largely Entertain'd you on *this* Topic *before times*, and Experienc'd your *Liberality* herein.

But ——— to go on in my *best* Wishes for you. In the *last* place, may you *Reap* the most *Desireable* and *Incomparable* Fruits of all this *here*, and Everlasting and Unutterable Affluence of Heavenly Joys at the Resurrection and Remuneration of the Just, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost,
Three Persons and but One GOD, be all Honour and Glory, to Ages without end. AMEN.*

F I N I S.

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